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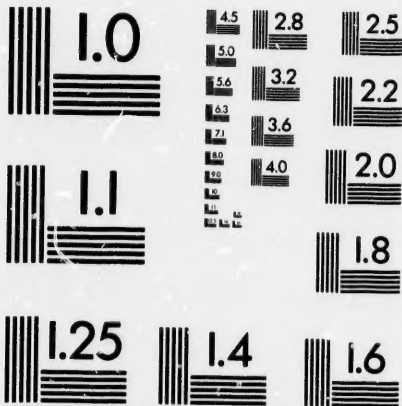
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PART I.

"The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree;
And seem, by thy sweet bounty, made
For those who follow Thee.

"There if thy Spirit touch the soul,
And grace her mean abode,
Oh! with what peace, and joy, and love,
She communes with her God!"

At one period of my life, I resided in the neighbouring parish to Lochlethie; but at that time I was too much occupied with the duties of a laborious profession, to have many hours to spare. I was even not much acquainted with its beauties, or with its intricate paths.

Business with the minister happened to take me on one occasion to his house, which was some miles distant from my own. The evening on my return

home, was sweet and calm. The sun had just set, casting a bright glow upon every object around me; not a breath agitated the leaves of the trees; and the birds were singing their evening song. This, too, by degrees, died away, till

"All was so still, so soft, in earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit there."

This very stillness, and the gathering shades of night, awoke me from a train of thought, into which I had insensibly fallen; and recollecting that I was far from home, and that I did not know the various difficult passes in the wild and romantic country in which I was, I looked hastily round for some friendly cottage, where I might inquire the shortest way to my own home.

Guided by a column of dark smoke, which I hoped proceeded from some house, though as yet I saw none, I descended an almost perpendicular cliff, at the foot of which I found a blacksmith's forge, and a neat little cabin buried in trees and rocks, which seemed formed to defend it equally from the storms of winter and from the heat of a summer's sun. I approached the door, with the intention of walking in. At that moment a strong manly voice began to sing, and was immediately followed by others. I listened for a moment, and discovered it was a family at their evening devotions to that Almighty God, who has

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said, that though He "inhabitheth eternity, and dwelleth in the high and holy place, yet He will dwell with him who is of a humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

I remained rivetted to the spot. I felt, that though all the works of the creation declare the glory of God, yet man alone is formed to offer up that tribute of praise which is due from the *creature* to the *Creator*.

After the service was over, I entered the cottage, and made known my wishes to a tall stout man, seated in a large arm chair, with his wife and children placed around him. He instantly rose, and putting the Bible, from which he had been reading, on a shelf, said, "I will show you the way, sir." At that moment I perceived he had lost a leg; and casting a look towards a little rosy fellow who had fixed his eyes upon me from the time I entered, I said I feared it would trouble him; that if one of the children would just put me on the right road, that was all I wanted. "O no! and please your honour, I will go myself," he replied, "thank God, though I have lost my leg, I need not complain of that; and I can walk a good bit yet with the help of this stick." He then prepared to accompany me, saying to his wife, "I will see the gentleman past the Brownie's Knowe,—the road is easily found after that."

I felt obliged to my conductor; and strongly prepossessed in his favour, by his frank open countenance and manners, we soon entered into conversation. He told me that he had lost his leg at the battle of Busaco, in the Peninsula, adding, "That was a day he would never forget."

Gentleman. "What! was the carnage so great on that occasion?"

Soldier. "Yes, sir, there was enough of that; but that is not just the thing I mean."

Gent. "Tell me, then, what you mean. Add to your present kindness, by telling me a little of your story, and whether you entered the army with those feelings of religion, which I think now distinguish your character."

Sol. "O no, sir; I was enlisted while engaged in a drunken frolic with several other young men, and went into many a battle without one thought but of how to merit the applause of my earthly commander. But thoughtless as we are, and proud of the glory we have won in many a hard battle against the French, God can put a hook in our nose, and a bridle in our lips, and turn back the proudest of our armies by the way in which it came, scattering the members of it as corn that is blasted before it is grown up, or as grass upon the housetops."

Gent. "I do not understand you, my good friend; we were not defeated at Busaco,—it was a glorious day for Britain.

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Sol. "I was defeated, sir, though, thank God, our men beat the French. Early in the day I got my wound, and was so stunned, that I can tell you little of what passed, till late in the evening after the troops had removed home, when I opened my eyes. All around me was dark and dreary; small rain was falling thickly. I supposed myself left there as dead, and for a few minutes felt a loneliness of heart I cannot describe. The rain ceased, the full, bright moon struggled through the thick clouds that had obscured her, and shone forth with peculiar lustre. By this light, I saw our men scattered on the ground,—a ghastly sight!

"I made a motion to rise, when the sergeant of our company called out to me, and inquired in a feeble voice who I was. I told him I was Duncan McDonald; but I said no more. This man I had long laughed at. He was very religious, and had often reproved me and my companions for our wicked ways. The very night before the battle, I had found him in a retired spot, reading his Bible with such attention, that he did not hear me till I was close to him. He then looked up: his eye was moistened by a tear; and in a cheerful animated tone he said, 'Duncan, are you ready to be shot to-morrow?' I answered shortly, 'As ready as my neighbours'—'Not so ready, believe me, as those who have obtained peace with God through the blood of the Lamb' and know that for them "to live is Christ,

and to die is gain"—he replied in a tone of exultation that filled me with wonder; and for the first time in my life, I did think with anxiety of what should become of my soul if I should be killed the next day. But then, when I joined my messmates, and we spoke of meeting the French the next day, I told them how Grant was employed, and laughed the loudest at the coward (as we called him) who was getting ready to die."

Gent. "Well, and what were your thoughts when you were both laid on the cold ground? Did you think he had chosen the better part?"

Sol. "No; but I felt humbled, and when my sergeant said, 'Duncan, I am mortally wounded; tell my wife, if you survive, that I commit her to that God who at this moment I feel to be all-sufficient; tell her to trust in Christ; that she will feel in the hour of death that He is a sure refuge, and able to keep that which she shall commit to Him, till the day of his appearing. Tell her, O, I cannot!' Upon that, sir, he fainted.

"I made out to draw close to him, and to take off his cap. In a little he opened his eyes, and with eagerness said, 'Tell her to bring up my children in the fear of God, to train them up for eternity. Give her my Bible, it is in my knapsack. No, Duncan, she already loves it, I give it to you. It is the word of God: O! read it as such, and may it lead you to Him who is truth!' Here he again fainted. I

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lay down by him quite exhausted, but more so by the awe that was upon my mind, than even my bodily pain. God seemed present with me, and I, a guilty sinner, ready to enter into hell. In a few minutes he again revived, and raising his hand with energy, he exclaimed, 'I know my Redeemer, I shall see Him as He is. I shall be like Him,—O blessed hope! for ever! for ever!' With that he died, sir. And I can tell you no more till I found myself laid on a comfortable bed in the hospital, and my poor wife weeping beside me. When I opened my eyes, she burst into a flood of tears, and for a few minutes every other feeling was lost in the pleasure of finding both her and myself alive, and together.

"But this did not last. I was very ill, and the idea of death soon returned with still more horror. There was a *reality* in the scene I had witnessed, that convinced me James Grant had indeed not trusted in cunningly devised fables,—that he did know in whom he had believed. The impression that *he* was gone to heaven, and that I was going to hell, remained constantly upon my thoughts. But I will not trouble you, sir, with all my sufferings at that time, both of body and of mind, or how long it was before I could form a hope that God would save me."

Here Duncan paused.

The gentleman, who had listened to the preceding account with the deepest attention, expressed his interest, and asked him to proceed. After clearing

his voice once or twice, he went on thus : " Well then, sir, I lay tossing on my bed,—my leg, and a sabre wound in my head, gave me the greatest pain ; yet such was the pain in my mind, that I hardly remember any thing else.

" The doctors said my leg must be taken off when I had strength to bear the operation. My poor wife gave herself up to despair at this information ; but I heeded them not, and only raved about death and eternity. When I got a little more composed I listened to my wife, and others, while they advised me ' not to distress myself so much, but to pray to God ; ' that ' He was very merciful, and would have pity upon me if I did my best ; ' and that ' Christ had died for men.'

" I tried their advice, but never found any good from it. I never did *all* I intended, and how could I know whether it was enough in the sight of God ? What was I to do with my past sins ? Well do I understand the feelings that made the idolaters of old ' offer their first born for the transgression of their soul ! ' for had I known any one duty which, by compensating for my past iniquities, would have purchased for me an exemption from punishment and a title to heaven, gladly at that moment would I have set about such a work, even though it had been painful as the lingering self-torment I had seen a Hindoo Brahmin inflict upon himself while I served in India. But to keep all God's laws, to love Him with my

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whole heart,—to do to my neighbour in all respects as I wished him to do to me, I felt to be impossible; and the advice of my well-meaning friends, and my own attempts, only increased my despair."

Genl. "And did you not meet with any one who could lead you to Christ, as the Mediator between God and man, and show you how He could retain his character of a just God and a Saviour?"

Sol. "Not one, sir. But, at last, one night I thought of the Bible James Grant had left me, and of his having said that it was the 'word of God,' and of his prayer that it might 'lead me to Him who was truth.' As soon as it was day, I sent my wife to inquire when the goods of the killed were to be sold, and to say that James had given me his Bible. The captain read and valued the Bible himself, and was pleased with this request; he desired that it might be given to my wife immediately, and that I could settle whether or not I was to pay for it afterwards.

"My poor Kate brought it to me as fast as she could. It seemed to have been well read. Many leaves were turned down, and many texts marked. I trembled when I got it, and repeated to myself, the 'word of God,' to 'lead me to Him who is truth!' It was some moments before I durst open this sacred volume; when I did so, a verse marked, and the leaf folded down, caught my eye; it was in St John xiv. 6, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' I read

no more. Was it Christ by whom I was to come! O! my soul did at that moment desire a teacher most earnestly. I looked up to God, and again taking up the Bible, I read on all that chapter. I did not understand almost any of it—still it soothed me! and when I came to the thirteenth verse, ‘Whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son,’ light seemed to break in upon my mind. I saw at last how I must pray, and hope mingled with this new light.

“From that day, sir, I studied the Bible, and found that it spoke a very different language from my former teachers. Every page showed me more deeply that I was a sinner, and brought me more humbly to Christ Jesus. I then understood how the *law*, written on my heart, had been a schoolmaster to bring me unto Christ, and that after it had done that office, it still remained a rule of life, which daily shows me more plainly that sin mixes in all I do, and that I need the blood of Christ to cleanse me from all sin; and that after I have come unto Him that I may have life, I must ‘come daily, that I may have it more abundantly, for without Him I can do nothing.’”

Gent. “Well, my good friend, and what did your friends in the hospital say to your change of sentiment?”

Sol. “Not much, sir, for I was so fully occupied, and so weak, that I spoke little; but when my mind was at ease, my fever left me and I grew stronger.

The doctors fixed a day to take off my leg; I shall never forget my poor Kate's distress; she looked at me with a face that melted my very heart; but I told her I would rather lose both my legs than return to the state of mind I had been in. She did not understand me, only begging me to lie still. The day came; my right leg was cut off, and I literally applied to myself the text, 'Better to enter into the kingdom of heaven halt or maimed, than having two legs to go into hell-fire.'

"After that, my story is very short; I soon obtained my discharge, and a pension. My wife and I settled in this country, with our children, for we had then but three, though we have eight now. I had been bred a blacksmith, and in a short time got enough of employment, when added to my pension, to support my family in comfort. My wife and I read our Bibles together; we prayed over them. She got on faster than I, and had to stand fewer remarks upon the change of life that followed, for she had fewer bad habits. She was a very faithful help to me; and we now often agree that we were never before so happy in our lives, only she cannot bear to think of the day on which I got my leg cut off. Our children are dutiful and affectionate. Surely, sir, I may say, 'Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.' When working in my forge, I often look back and think that I am the poor guilty prodigal,—I hope I am returned to

my Father's house. Only those who have tried both ways of life, can form an idea of the difference of happiness to be enjoyed here below, from the one compared to the other."

We had been some minutes standing on the Brownie's Knowe, and, at the end of this speech, my tall companion pointed out the road to me with care; and after shaking hands, and mutually inviting each other to our several houses, we parted, and I hastened home.

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PART. II

"The rush may rise where waters flow,
And flags beside the stream;
But soon their verdure fades and dies
Before the scorching beam;

"So is the sinner's hope cut off;
Or, if it transient rise,
'Tis like the spider's airy web,
From every breath that flies.

AFTER the events that I have related, my military friend experienced some heavy trials. His daughter Marion had reached her seventeenth year, and was the eldest of the family. With pain and labour her parents had carried her during many a long march. Many a feeling of fatigue and anxiety she had beguiled by her innocent prattle, and made all their toil seem light by her love and playfulness. Mrs Somerville, who lived in the *big house*, now offered to take Marion into her service, as under house-maid. So very desirable an offer, on her first going to service, was not to be refused; indeed it filled the parents' hearts with joy, particularly as Mrs Somerville was considered a very good mistress. She had often, when walking, called at their cottage, and delighted the whole family by her kind and gentle way of speaking. With all these advantages, the

offer was accepted with joy ; but as the time drew near, pain at the idea of parting with their dear child, and anxiety regarding her, filled the hearts of both parents.

The evening before Marion was to set out, Duncan took her apart from the rest of the family. He spoke to her in the kindest and most serious manner. He told her of the deceitfulness of her own heart,—of the dangers she would meet with—of that God who seeth in secret, who hears every prayer, numbers every sigh, and who has promised that those who wait upon Him shall renew their strength. He then knelt down with her, and with a full heart committed her to God in prayer. Marion wept much ; she fervently joined in her father's prayer, that she might be preserved from every danger, and that she might be early numbered among the lambs of Christ's flock,—that He would guide, protect, and defend her.

Many were the good resolutions with which she set out, and tender was her parting with her parents, and with her brothers and her sisters.

When she arrived at the big house, Mrs Somerville sent for her, and telling her what was to be her work in the gentlest way, she added that she hoped she would be happy, and be a good girl. Marion felt encouraged and grateful,—she fully expected to be happy with so good a mistress. With the servants below she felt strange and awkward ; every thing was new to her, and they amused themselves with

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her looks of wonder at all that differed from what she had seen in her father's cottage ; but in a few days she began to get up her spirits, and to be pleased and attracted with all the novelty she saw around her. She slept in the same room with Nancy, the upper chamber-maid. For the first week Marion had risen early, and unperceived by Nancy, had spent the first half hour of every day in reading her Bible, and in prayer. One morning Nancy awoke, and perceiving how she was employed, said nothing at the time, but hastened her to her work. Afterwards, when they were cleaning out Mrs Somerville's room together, Nancy said, "So, Marion, you are one of the preaching sort. I warn you that you will have a fine life of it here ; wait till James hears of it."

Marion. "I do not know what you mean."

Nancy. "What makes you rise in the morning, poring over your Bible, when I am still snug in my bed ?"

Marion. "What harm will that do me ? I read the Bible every day ; my father and mother taught me to do so."

Nancy. "Well, and what good does it do you ?"

Marion. "I there learn the will of God, and how to obey Him. How else shall I be ready to die ?"

Nancy. "One thing I will tell you, you had better not speak in that way, or go on in that way here."

Marion. "What harm will it do to you ?"

Nancy. "We all hate these very good people ;

they are a parcel of hypocrites, and are the first to tell tales, and do one an ill turn."

Marion. "I never tell tales. My father could not bear any of us to do so."

Nancy. "Well, we will see."

Marion was astonished, and did not know how to understand the threats that were thrown out by Nancy. Her father had often told her never to mind, when people laughed at her for serving God according to his own commandment. He had told her, they would only do so while they hoped to turn her from the right path; that whenever her own steady conduct had convinced them that they need form no such hope, they would let her alone. But he had added that this was not our rest,—that we must expect difficulty,—and that we must by prayer and watchfulness, obtain strength to withstand it. Still Marion felt puzzled and solitary. She formed no plan, and was quite unprepared what to answer, when Nancy told James at dinner that she was one of your methodistical folks, and that he would do well to quiz her out of it. Marion denied the charge, and said, with many blushes, that she was not more serious than others. James said, with a sneer, that he was glad to hear it; but to take care, for he enjoyed meeting with a hypocrite, it was such good fun to roast them out of it.

Marion's conscience reproached her deeply for the part she had acted; she remembered that our

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Saviour said, "Whosoever will deny me before men, him shall I deny before my Father and the holy angels. Ye cannot serve two masters; for either ye will hate the one, and love the other, or else ye will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Marion was uncomfortable. The usual hour of her evening devotions returned,—the hour when she knew her family at home would be offering their prayers for the continued guidance and protection of a God of mercy,—when she would be remembered by her dear father at a throne of grace. It had hitherto been a time of soothing comfort, now it was spent in self-reproach and fears. But she did not set herself in earnest to obey God, to follow the footsteps of her Saviour through good report, and through evil report. She shrunk from the scorn of the wicked, and forgot that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that He has promised to be with us in every trial.

A few weeks passed, in which nothing particular occurred. Marion felt the insensible influence of living with those who did not acknowledge God in all their ways. Her heart grew spiritually cold and dead. She read the Bible without attention or self-application; and, in her prayers, she sought more to quiet her own conscience by the form, than by holding communion with God in Christ, to obtain the strength and guidance she required.

After some weeks passed in this way, the family

of Mr and Mrs Somerville removed to Edinburgh, with the intention of spending the winter there. A short time after their arrival, Nancy told Marion that they were going to have a violin and a dance; that General Dundas's, servants with some other people, were coming, but not to be a tell-tale, and say any thing about it.

Marion. "What! does Mrs Somerville not allow it?"

Nancy. "O no! it is needless to say any thing to her about it. She is to be out herself that night."

Marion. "But what will come of the curtains which she is in such a hurry to have finished?"

Nancy. "O never mind the curtains, they can be done again. We cannot be always slaving."

Marion. "But, Nancy, my father taught me, that to neglect my work when I received wages for doing it, was not much more honest than actual theft."

Nancy. (Angrily.) "Nonsense, your father knows nothing about the matter; and I fancy he was not always so particular as he is now. People often make one law for their neighbour, and another for themselves."

Marion. "My father never does that; he laments his conduct when young, and blames it openly."

Nancy. "Well, dress yourself without more ado; who knows what General Dundas's servants may think of your rosy face?"

Marion felt as in a new world, and very solitary.

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She knew that the under-cook, who had been hired after the family's arrival in Edinburgh, was very religious; she wondered what she meant to do, and determined to consult her, though perhaps not exactly to do the same, for she was a poor orphan girl, but very lately in place, and still very ill clothed; for which reason, she was little thought of by the gayer part of the servants, though she did her work better and more steadily than any of them.

Poor Sally had not been told of the intended party, but she advised Marion to have nothing to do with it. The two girls had a long conversation, in which Sally spoke strongly of the danger they were in, and that they must watch carefully against the very appearance of evil. Marion still remained undecided, and before she was come to any determination, Mrs Somerville went out, and the party assembled in the servants' hall. Sally was hardly invited, but her anxiety about Marion took her in. The two girls were whispering to each other, when Nancy, after saying something aside to James, and one of the General's servants, called out, "Now, Marion, take care how you listen to mischief."

Both the men then joined, and inquired what she meant by mischief.

Nancy. "Why, there's Sally would think it a sin to take any diversion, and perhaps that does well enough for the under-cook. But Marion has half a mind to follow the same kind of plan."

Sally. (Seeing Marion look so much alarmed said mildly), "Nancy, my diversions and yours are not the same, but believe me, I would not change with you, and the day may come when you would change with me."

Nancy. "And what day will that be? when I am old and ugly?"

All the company laughed loud at this piece of wit, and one of the General's servants took out Marion, while James and Nancy also stood up and began a reel.

Sally stayed till the end of the reel, then again renewed her persuasions to Marion to come away with her. But all she said was drowned by the laughter and jokes of the party. So, after this fruitless attempt, she rose and left the servants' hall. She went to her own little room, and there with her Bible, and a heart that could with confidence look up to God for his help and guidance in all things, she soon forgot every unpleasant feeling but those which Marion's present situation awakened in her mind. For her she felt greatly more anxious than for the others, for she had seen enough of her to know that she was acting against *light*.

Marion spent the evening in a noisy gaiety she had never before witnessed. Many things were laughed at, which she had been in the habit of hearing approved of. Nothing was so great a sin in the eyes of her present associates, as to be what they called

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"preaching creatures," "who thought themselves better than any one else." Many allusions were made to a house-maid who had quitted Mrs Somerville last term. One of the men sat down, and casting up his eyes, and drawing down the corners of his mouth, declared that was the way she sat in church. Then clapping Marion on the shoulder, he advised her to take care of such folly, for that he could assure her if she did not, she would never get a sweetheart in her life. Marion's heart filled; she felt that these opinions so laughed at, were the opinions of her kind father and mother, and which they had learnt from the Bible. But she had not the boldness to say so, and even joined in the laugh.

When they went to bed, Marion told Sally all that had passed. Sally blamed her for having stayed, and told her, that it would be more difficult for her to avoid remaining the next time; that people must determine to be either one thing or another. We must not "halt between two opinions." We must decide whether we mean to serve God or the world.

Marion. "But, Sally, is it wrong to join in a little diversion?"

Sally. "Answer that yourself. Do you think that you spent last night without much sin? The people came to your master's house without his knowledge. Not one bit of the work for which they received wages was done by his servants. Is that *honest*?"

Marion. "But that was their fault, not mine."

Sally. "If you remained with them, you equally neglected your work, and joined in their bad ways ; and we are to 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them.' But to come to yourself, did you not join in laughing at many things you had been taught to think right? And even if you had not so been brought up, they are right according to God's unerring word, and by that *word* we shall all be judged. Have you not prayed to be kept out of temptation? Dare you then place yourself in it, and lose all sobriety of mind?"

Marion sighed, but was silent.

Sally. "And what do you say to other practices, for instance all the opening of notes that goes on? Do you remember the other night, when Nancy opened the still wet wafer in the letter that was brought for Miss Rogers the governess, and James read it aloud to every one present? Did *you* not say that you hoped the answer would be sent down to the kitchen before the wafer was dry, that you might know whether Miss Rogers meant to assist her friend or not?"

Marion. "I do not say that was right, but it would do Miss Rogers no harm, our knowing that her friend applied to her when in distress."

Sally. "No harm to Miss Rogers! but what do you think of the conduct of those who thus betray every *trust*? You, Marion, robbed Miss Rogers of those secrets, which I am convinced she would feel

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much greater *theft* than if you had opened her drawers, and taken away her best gown or cap,—not that they are very safe either. Let us beware of calling things by a wrong name ; and O ! Marion, remember what Scripture says of eye-service.”

Marion. “What do you mean, Sally ? I do not open Miss Rogers’ drawers.”

Sally. “No, Marion ; such great sins you would fear ; still, what is the difference between opening drawers and wearing the things that are kept in them ?”

Marion. (Angrily.) “You have been spying, I suppose, that I put on a pair of stockings belonging to one of the young ladies to go to Church last Sunday.”

Sally. “It does not require much spying, to see that many things are worn by servants in this house that do not belong to them. The love of dress leads to wrong things, which, if not theft by the laws of *man*, are certainly little different from it by the laws of God.”

Marion. (Still angrily.) “Sally, it is true what Nancy says, that *some* good people are the first to find fault and to tell tales.”

Sally. “Marion, I wish to save you from the danger to which we are both exposed : but if you are angry, I will say no more.”

Marion. (In tears.) “Oh no ! Sally, I well know you are right ; but I cannot bear to be laughed at ;

and though you are far better than I, yet they laugh so at you, and treat you with such contempt."

Sally. "I know they do; and if they laughed at me for any thing wrong or foolish, then I would hope to take the truth, and be the better for it, though not given in a pleasant manner. But when they only laugh at me for being afraid of temptation, and for daring to disapprove of their dishonest, sinful ways, what the worse am I? May I not even hope that my God will make their very laughing turn to my good? for He has said, 'Happy are ye when men say all manner of evil of you *falsely*.'"

Marion. "Well, Sally, I know you are right, and I will try. But General Dundas's servants will laugh so dreadfully at me."

Sally. "O Marion! do you think any of our Saviour's disciples would have left all and followed Him, if they had minded the sneers of their friends and neighbours, who knew Him so little that they said all his mighty miracles were done by the power of Beelzebub, and finished by crucifying the Lord of glory? O! remember, my dear Marion, that we cannot serve two masters. Do let us try in the beginning of life, to choose the right path,—every hour we depart from it renders it only more difficult for us to return, though 'wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' I do not believe you are so happy as you were, since you left that simple road."

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Marion burst into tears, and confessed that Sally was right,—that she would try and be more steady. Yet she could not see the necessity of staying away from what she had no blame in beginning, when her work was done. And, surely, people might be religious without being laughed at. No one ever laughed at her father.

Sally. "Not now, that he has been religious for many years; but I dare say he had some difficulties at first, and that many of his companions would consider him a *methodistical, canting, praying* fellow. He very likely, too, had merited this, by laughing at others, before he himself became religious."

Marion. "How do you know that?—you never saw my father."

Sally. "Never; but it is the fate of every one when he first comes forth, and is separated from a world lying in wickedness. Those who are still the servants of Satan, do his work, and throw every difficulty in the way of those who desire to escape from that state of sin and corruption in which *all* are born, and to flee to Him whose service is perfect freedom."

Marion, at home, had listened to her father, while he read and explained the sacred Scriptures. She had joined in his fervent prayers with emotion; and her friends and herself had, at times, hoped that this was the effect of a real change of heart. But, alas!

Marion had never for one moment *stood alone*. Her parents' looks of approving delight ever followed her when she evinced the smallest pleasure in religion ; and their watchful anxiety, together with her retired situation, defended her from danger. Far different had been Sally's fate ; she was a friendless orphan. She had been sent to school to learn to read and sew, and there she also learned to know and serve her God. With tears of joy she found that God declares himself to be the orphan's stay, that they may look to Him and say, "When father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." This hope had supported her in every trial, and defended her in every danger. She could now say, "I will fear no evil. Though I pass through the waters, He will be with me, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow me ; for the Lord my God, the Holy One of Israel, is my *Saviour*."

After the last evening of gaiety, Mrs Somerville was for some time confined to the house by a slight indisposition, and all below stairs went on more quietly and regularly.

One Sunday, Nancy and Marion were joined, on their way home from church, by James and the General's two servants. Marion was so agreeably entertained, that she entirely forgot that it was the Sabbath, and joined in all the foolish laughing and talking that went on. The strangers came in, and remained to tea. Sally was then obliged to be pre-

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sent ; and during her stay, there was rather more quiet and decency, but, as soon as she left them, they began to laugh at her ; and one of the men offered to show the company her Sunday manner. Marion saw that she was still *half* suspected of favouring Sally's opinions ; and to prove that this was not the case, she laughed at all their jokes, and remained with them the whole evening. She went to bed without having offered up one prayer for mercy to that God who has said, thou shalt "keep the Sabbath-day holy."

The following morning, Sally determined to make one more effort to save this poor unsteady wanderer from her present danger ; though her hopes of success became daily fainter. The first time she found herself alone with her, she said, "Marion, do you consider what an express commandment we have in Scripture, regarding the Sabbath ; and can you hope for the blessing of God in your present way of going on ?"

Marion. "Why, Sally, I do no more than every one else in this house, except yourself. I do not mean to be so needlessly precise."

Sally. "And what is your hope, then, my dear girl ; do you believe the Bible ?"

Marion. "O yes, and I often read it. But every one does not understand the Bible in the way you do. There, Thomas says God is too good to wish anything but the happiness of his creatures."

Sally. "And do you doubt that ? But is this dia-

orderly way of going on, happiness? Marion, did you not tell me that your father said he had never known any real happiness till his heart was turned to his God and Saviour? Besides that, every part of the Bible represents us as born in *sin*, under the *present* wrath and curse of God? It is only those who turn from their sins, and steadily endeavour to walk in the narrow way that leadeth to life eternal, that shall be saved; so that even if all this folly did give you happiness, which I rather think you will confess it does not, what would be your advantage if 'you gained the whole world, and lost your own soul?'

Marion. "But, Sally, never fear, I will not lose my own soul. I am still very young, and thank God, very stout. We shall be quiet during the summer in the country. I will do better then."

Sally. "Have you kept any one of your resolutions yet, my dear Marion?"

Marion. "No. But I have not made any very firmly."

Sally. "And never will, if you do not take care. Every one, Marion, intends to do better; but, alas! many are cut off before that time to do better arrives, and are appointed their portion in hell, where the worm dieth not for ever."

Marion. "Oh Sally, you frighten me, what must I do? I have often tried to do better."

Sally. "Come unto God by Christ; pray earnestly

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that He would enable you to repent of your sins, and to break with *all* your present ways,—that He in mercy would ‘heal your backslidings, and love you freely.’ Continue steadily in the use of appointed means, till you again read God’s word, and pray, with the comfort you did in your father’s house. Avoid all your present companions. Tell them that you dare no longer go on as you have done. If you would do this, Marion, I would very soon promise you a very different degree of happiness from any you have known since you entered this house.”

Marion. “Thomas goes away very soon, he would laugh at me.”

Sally. “Thomas! What odds does *he* make to our duty? If you have anything to do with that good-for-nothing, your happiness is lost in *this* world and the *next*.”

Marion wept bitterly, but was ever too unsteady in purpose to come to any determination. During all this time, she did her work attentively—she prided herself upon doing so; and she heard so often, and she desired so earnestly to believe, that the strictness of religious principle in which she had been brought up, and which she saw Sally steadily practise in the midst of much temptation, was unnecessary, that her conscience was by degrees lulled to sleep; she lived without prayer, and she felt quite cheerful and happy under Sally’s disapproving looks, and thought her as dull and silent as her fellow-servants did.

This last restraint was, however, soon to be removed,—an unexpected situation offered for Sally. During this time of trial she had “possessed her soul in patience,” and often looked up to God to bless and sanctify it while it continued, and in his own good time to remove it. That time was come, all was made easy, and her mistress permitted her to leave between terms.

After her departure, the servants showed that they had felt this poor despised but virtuous girl a restraint. They were oftener out, and as often had company at home. Mrs Somerville began to suspect that all was not right. She was what is called a good mistress,—she gave high wages,—she had plenty of servants for the work she required to be done,—she desired them to go to church, and to behave themselves quietly; but she was too indolent, and too little under the consciousness of the deep responsibility that belongs to the heads of families in the sight of God, to give herself much trouble in seeing whether her orders were obeyed or not: but when suspicion was once awakened in her mind, it did not easily die away again.

Mrs Somerville rang her bell one evening for Nancy,—no one answered; so after ringing again, she went down to the kitchen, where she found only the old cook. From her she learned that Nancy and Marion were out at a dance, given by General Dundas's servants. Having obtained this information

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with some difficulty from the old woman, she desired her not to say that she had told her any thing of the matter,—an order which the alarming charge of tell-tale made the cook implicitly obey.

While undressing, Mrs Somerville asked Nancy where Marion and she had been, for that she had rang twice without being answered.

Nancy. "Oh, my Lady, I am sorry for that ; I heard that my poor dear father was ill, and just went over to see him."

Mrs. S. "And how is he now ?"

Nancy. "Better, thank you, but very weakly yet."

Mrs S. "And why did you take Marion with you ?"

Nancy. "Because my father is fond of her, and she has a tender way about him ; but we were out only a very short time, and I am so vexed you should have wanted us."

Mrs Somerville said no more: and Nancy no sooner left her than she told Marion what had passed, and begged her (if asked) not to say any thing of where they had been, adding that nothing could be shabbier than a tell-tale. Marion agreed to what was asked of her. But her father had often shown her in Scripture, the *many* severe judgments denounced against liars,—that they shall have their portion assigned to them in the lake of fire and brimstone. She felt frightened for a moment, and hoped that her mistress would not ask her any questions.

The next morning Mrs Somerville met Marion on the stairs, and calling her into the drawing-room, asked her where she had been the evening before with Nancy.

Marion. "Last night, Madam? Oh! we were but a very short time out; I was quite vexed when I heard you had wanted Nancy."

Mrs S. "But I inquired where you were, and how long you were out?"

Marion. "Nancy told me her father was ill."

Mrs S. "Were you there?"

Marion. "We called there."

Mrs S. "Were you no where else?"

Marion. (In a very low voice.) "No, Ma'am."

Mrs Somerville saw plainly that Marion was not telling her the truth; but her indolent temper, or her *good* temper, as she would have called it, that could not bear to give others pain, prevented her from saying any more, or from making any attempt to convince Marion of the sin she was committing, and which a little reflection upon the different manner in which the two maids had answered, might have showed her was not the first of many offences of the same kind on the part of Nancy, while Marion had still to overcome the scruples and good habits implanted with much care by a tender and pious parent, and which he valued for his child more than any earthly good. Mrs Somerville saved herself all the pain these reflections might have given her; and.

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without one thought of that eternity to which both herself and her servants were hastening, she determined to part with Nancy and Marion at next term.

Marion, on her part, was quite happy to have got off so well, and spent the evening in more than usual merriment. Her conscience had almost ceased to trouble her, and its still small voice was now easily drowned by the novelty of some new amusement.

PART III.

" When pining sickness wastes the frame,
 Acute disease and weak'ning pain ;
 When life fast spends her feeble flame,
 And all the help of man is vain ;
 Joyless and dark all things appear,
 Languid the spirits, weak the flesh ;
 Med'cines can't ease, nor cordials cheer,
 Nor food support, nor sleep refresh.
 O ! then to have recourse to God,
 To pray to Him in time of need ;
 To feel the balm of Jesus' blood,
 This is to find a friend indeed."

THE very day after the circumstances we have mentioned, Marion was taken ill. After a feverish and sleepless night, she tried to rise in the morning, but was obliged to return to bed. A very severe cold succeeded, and she was for several days unable to do her work. Nancy said nothing of her illness to Mrs Somerville, lest she should make too minute inquiries about how she had caught it, and find out that she had been wet to the skin, in returning from the dance given by General Dundas's servants.

Mrs Somerville was satisfied with what was told her. Provided the servants did their work among themselves, she did not much care by whom it was done. She was therefore greatly shocked the first time she met Marion, to see her look so ill, and kindly inquired what was the matter with her.

Marion with tears in her eyes, told her all she felt, and of her extreme weakness.

Mrs Somerville became alarmed, and sent for medical aid. The doctor, after trying various remedies to reduce her cough, at last told Mrs Somerville that the poor girl could not live unless she was instantly removed to a better climate, and taken the greatest care of.

Mrs Somerville intended returning to Elmly Park, her country residence, with her family, as soon as the season invited such a change ; but, as that would not be for some weeks yet, she wrote to Duncan M'Donald, without saying any thing to his daughter, telling him how ill she was, and requesting to know what he wished done.

The day on which Duncan received this letter, he came to my house, to beg that during his absence, I would undertake the distribution of the books belonging to a library, formed by subscription in his parish. After my willingly agreeing to his wishes, he told me of the illness of his daughter, and that he was going to fetch her home instantly. I felt truly interested in my friend's anxiety ; and after that often saw him in his own house, and learned all the particulars here related regarding his daughter Marion.

The next morning Duncan set out, and walked to Edinburgh, with no other assistance than the occasional seat upon a cart, that was offered him by those who felt for a wounded soldier.

The unexpected arrival of her father was too much for Marion. She buried her face in her apron, and could only answer his affectionate inquiries by sobs and tears. The very sight of him changed her view of many things, and she felt she was not the Marion he had parted with only *eight* short months ago. Duncan also felt this meeting with his child overpower him. She seemed very ill: to that he imputed her present agitation; and he became alarmed for her health, and very impatient to take her home. Anxious as he was to hurry their departure, he had time to see that religion did not govern the hearts or conduct of his dear Marion's fellow-servants: and fears that he might find her principles injured, were soon added to those her health excited. He, however, said nothing; he only watched every word and every look of his child.

The removal was performed with more ease to Marion than her father expected, and his hopes revived. During the journey, they were prevented, by the presence of their fellow-travellers in the mail, from holding much conversation. Duncan even thought his daughter avoided it; but the remark gave him no anxiety, for he was soon to see her again with her mother under the roof where she had been brought up, and where the openness of mutual confidence and affection reigned, and sweetened all their intercourse with each other.

I will not dwell on the mixed feelings that agitated

the hearts of this little family, when Duncan opened the door for Marion, and the fond mother pressed her sick and altered child to her heart ; nor on what that child felt at again finding herself in her mother's arms, and surrounded by her brothers and sisters.

In a short time both parties became more composed, and entered into many details of what had passed. The children, and even the mother, were eager to relate every event and every change that had taken place in the parish. Duncan again thought Marion feared and evaded some of the questions which her mother and sisters put to her regarding what they did at the fine house, and what kind of people she had seen in Edinburgh.

The evening was now far advanced, and it was the hour of prayer. Marion could not again witness this solemn and rational way of closing the evening without much emotion. When her father thanked God for their safe return, and prayed for her recovery, she trembled, wept, and nearly fainted. The whole family were alarmed at her agitation, and considering it as an indication of bodily weakness, she was put to bed instantly. But Duncan's fears were confirmed : and he determined to take the first opportunity to convince himself whether they were just or not.

The next day, however, Marion was very ill ; the fever and cough returned with redoubled violence,

and all the symptoms of returning health and strength, that had given hope to her parents, disappeared. She became restless, fretful, and uneasy. Every means in their power to soothe and give her relief, the various members of this affectionate family employed with unwearied assiduity. They read to her. Her father knelt by her bed-side, and poured out his supplications to God for her. His own burthened heart found relief in this employment; but her averted eye, and anxious countenance, showed she did not feel that comfort flow from it, which he prayed might be imparted to her soul by a God of mercy and love.

One day he said to her, after having prayed with her, "Marion, my child, you seem very uneasy: is it only your body that suffers? Is your mind at ease?"

Marion. "Oh! my body suffers much indeed."

Duncan. "But is it only your body? Can you look up with hope to Him who has thus afflicted you? Can you hope that you shall be enabled to say, 'It was good for me to be afflicted; for before I was afflicted I went astray, but afterwards I kept thy law?'"

Marion. "O! I have indeed gone astray. I have no hope."

Duncan. "No hope! my child, what do you mean?"

Marion. "I cannot pray, father, I cannot join in your prayers. In what can I hope?"

Duncan. "In the Lord Jesus Christ, who died

for you, and who has said, 'Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be made white as wool.'"

Marion. "I once loved these words, but now I do not feel them. You know not how often I have put away all thoughts of God from me. Now He has forsaken me!"

Duncan. "My dear Marion, do not speak in this way. God 'will heal your backslidings, and love you freely.' Put your trust in that promise."

Marion. "I cannot; when I try to pray, the heavens are brass, and my heart is hard as iron."

Duncan. "Tell me what weighs upon your conscience. Tell your father all the sorrows of your heart; you know how much he loves you."

Marion, with considerable reluctance, told her father her history since she had quitted home. When she had done, she seemed much exhausted, and seeing her father about to reply, she added, *quickly*, "I know you will tell me there is mercy with God for the very chief of sinners. But there is *no* mercy for one who day after day knew she was sinning against his holy laws, and feeling all the reproaches of her conscience, still did go on day after day growing worse, till even conscience ceased to speak."

Duncan. "Yes, my child, even for such a one there is free mercy. God has excluded none. He says, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ends of the earth.' 'Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted,

that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry.' Do not then, when the offers of God are so free, exclude yourself. Only, from this experience of the depravity of your heart, prize more deeply that pardon and mercy that is offered you in Christ Jesus. His mercies fail not."

Marion. (Pressing her father's hand to her heart.) "I sometimes think, that when I get stronger I will try and do better. But now I cannot think without pain, my head grows giddy. Oh! I have too much to do for one so ill."

Duncan. (Kissing the burning forehead of his child.) "And even in health you could not do one jot or tittle of the work; only keep in the faithful use of appointed means, and Christ will do all for you. Those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

An expression of so much pain passed over Marion's countenance during the last part of her father's speech, that he stopped, and remained in perfect silence by her. Self-reproach filled his heart, for having allowed her to go to a scene of so much temptation.

Marion daily grew worse. Mrs Somerville returned to Elmly Park. She sent to inquire how she was, the day after her arrival. From the answer she received, she was alarmed, and went over the next day to see her. When Mrs Somerville entered the

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cottage, Marion had fallen into a broken and disturbed sleep. The family were speaking in whispers. Poor Duncan told her how very ill his daughter was, and by degrees mentioned all he yet knew of the history of her mind. Mrs Somerville wept. She felt how little she had done her duty to this poor young girl. The immortal interests of those in her house had never before been felt as her duty. She desired they should go to church on Sundays, and not be out without leave; but till that moment, when she witnessed the changing countenance of the father and the bitter tears of the mother, over the ruined comfort of their eldest child—till she saw the looks of love and tenderness with which they gazed upon her death-like countenance as she lay asleep,—had she never felt the guilt that belongs to *all* those who have not done all in their power to save those committed to their care.

In a short time Marion awoke, and impatiently asked for drink. Her mother brought it to her; but when she raised herself in bed to take it, and saw Mrs Somerville, she sunk back, and covered her head with the bed-clothes. Her mother said, "My dear Marion, it is the lady come to inquire for you; she is very kind." Marion exclaimed, "Oh that I had never seen her! Her house has been my ruin."

Mrs Somerville heard these words,—they went to her heart. She rose quickly and left the house, feeling that the blood of this offending sufferer was upon

her head, and would deservedly cry for vengeance; for though "it must needs be that offences come, woe unto them by whom they come." Mrs Somerville sent every thing that she fancied could be a comfort to this poor family; but in doing so, she felt, for the first time, in its full force, how little supplying the wants of the poor perishing body can atone for the injury done to the immortal soul.

Marion daily grew weaker, though she never seemed to apprehend that her illness might end fatally; on the contrary, she often spoke of the future. She at times seemed happier in mind, and said, that she hoped, when she was better, that she would be more steady; for that nothing short of that could be any evidence to herself that she was in earnest in her desire to serve God.

Duncan. "My dear child, do not make your own terms, but come simply to God, relying on his promises of mercy to you in Christ."

Marion. "I would sometimes like to do so, but then I feel that I cannot *now* make any better resolutions than I *often* did before I left you. Oh! if you could have seen my heart the last evening I was with you, when you, father, spoke so seriously to me, and prayed with me, you would see it is not to be trusted,—that I cannot count upon myself till I am tried."

Duncan. "I well know what you feel, and also that your heart is not to be depended on; and I

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trust, Marion, that if God in mercy *should spare your life*, you will be more humble, more watchful, from what has passed."

A slight paleness, succeeded by a deep hectic flush, passed over Marion's emaciated countenance during this speech; and she repeated, "If God should spare my life!—I am not so ill."

Duncan. "You are very ill, my child; but God is all-powerful."

Marion. "Does the doctor say I am in danger?"

Duncan. "He says your cough is very bad."

These words were uttered by Duncan with much suppressed emotion. Marion uttered a faint scream, and sunk on her pillow with a look of horror. Her mother came to her relief, and her unhappy father withdrew. The doctor had told him, some days before, that his daughter's danger was so very great, that he entertained no hope of her recovery, and that he expected her death to be sudden, and probably soon. Deeply as he felt for her, and painful as the idea of parting with his dear child was to his own heart,—the idea of her immortal soul,—the state of uncertainty he was in regarding its safety,—and the sanguine hopes she often expressed of her speedy recovery,—made him feel it his positive duty to inform her of her real situation. The pain it cost him, may be conceived by those who have been called to perform the like painful duty, but cannot be described. Marion continued much agitated, but spoke little.

She spent a sleepless night; and calling her father to her about sunrise, she begged him to "pray for her, as she could not for herself."

Duncan. "I pray for you day and night, my dear child. See if you can find one text in Scripture that deprives you of hope. Think of the thief on the cross."

Marion. "He did not know the truth, and then act against it."

Duncan. "Think of St Paul. He was a persecutor, a blasphemer."

Marion. "He did it ignorantly."

Duncan. "Then think of the many promises with which the Bible abounds. 'Before they cry, I will answer them.' 'I am found of them that sought me not.' Think how often, when the children of Israel forsook God, and worshipped and served idols, He gave them up into the hands of their enemies, as He has given you up to this illness; but as soon as they sought the Lord, even while they were yet speaking, He answered them in mercy."

Marion raised herself in bed, and clasping her hands together, exclaimed earnestly, "Oh God! if Thou canst have mercy on a guilty"—

She sunk into her father's arms, and after a few moments' struggle expired.

Amidst the extreme agitation that this sudden event occasioned among the inhabitants of the cottage, Duncan M'Donald alone uttered not one word.

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He was "still, and remembered that it was God." In a short time, he knelt down by his dead Marion, and, in feeble and broken accents, prayed for submission and support to them all.

I need add no more. Duncan and his family experienced the faithfulness of God. He has said to his own people, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." The everlasting arms were underneath them, "and all did work together for their good."

But, Oh that the young would take warning!—that they would remember it is only the "fool that makes a mock at sin!"—that we must "all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ, every man to be judged according to his works, whether they be good or evil!"—and that "in such an hour as ye think not of, the Son of Man cometh!"

THE END.

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